

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TALK WITH EX-PRIME MINISTER RIFAI-AREA SITUATION
KING TRIP.

1. SUMMARY: EX-PRIME MINISTER RIFIA SAYS KING HUSEINS
MAJOR MESSAGE IN US VISIT IS THAT JORDAN PREPARED
TO WORK WITH US TO ACHIEVE MIDEAST SETTLEMENT, IN
CLUDING ACTIVE ROLE TO REGAIN WEST BANK. KING HOW
EVER IS PESSIMISTIC IN EVENTUAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND
WISHES TO AVOID OVER-OPTIMISTIC PUBLIC
STATEMENTS LIKE THOS MADE BY SADAT. RIFAI
TOLD KING THAT LOCAL TALK ABOUT JORDANIANS HOMELEAND FOR
PALESTINIANS IS DANGEROUS TO REGIME BUT KING DOES
NOT APPEAR OVERLY WORRIED FOR PRESENT. PLO REPS
TOLD RIFAI THAT ARAFAT PREPARED TELL KING PLO WILL
SUPPORT WHATEVER US OFFERS KING REGARDING WEST
BANK. RIFAI ADVOCATES INCLUDING PLO AND WEST BANKER
REPS IN JORDANIANS GENEVA DELEGATION AND PRIOR PLO-
GOJ AGREEMENT TO JORDANIAN-WEST BANK LINKS SUCH AS
CONFEDERATION ALONG LINES OF UNITED ARAB KINGDON
PLAN, WHICH HE ALSO SEES AS PRESIDENT CARTERS GENERAL
OBJECTIVE. IF THIS IS US GOAL RIFAI ADVISES
CAREFUL APPROACH TO KING HUSSEIN EMPHASIZING KING
NOT EXPECTED TALKE ALL THE RISKS. RIFAI SAYS JORDAN
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SYRIAN DISCUSSIONS ARE STALEMATED. KING MAY VISIT
DAMASCUS APRIL 16 BEFORE US TRIP. END SUMMARY

2. I SAW EX PRIME MINISTER RIFAI APRIL 15 FOR A
REVIEW OF THE AREA SITUATION. RIFAI HAD SEEN
THE KING FOR LONG CONVERSATION IN AQBAE A FEW DAYS AGO.

3. ON THE KINGS TRIP RIFAI SAID HE THOUGHT KINGS MAJOR MESSAGE WOULD BE THAT JORDAN PREPARED TO WORK WITH US TO ACHIEVE SETTELEMENT. IF US THOUGHT JORDANS ROLE INVOLVED ACTION TO REGAIN WEST BANK THEN JORDAN PREPARED TO PLAY. TO EXTENT THAT JORDAN COULD RECOVER FULL TERRITORY OR MOST OF IT KING WOULD TAKE MORE FORWARD ROLE. RISKS IN MAKING TERRITORIAL COMPROMISES OF SIGNIFICANT PROPORTIONS WERE GREAT AND JORDAN WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IN SUCH CASE. KING WOULD WANT TO MAKE ALL THIS CLEAR TO US.

4. RIFAI NOTED THAT KING IS ESSENTIALLY PESSIMISTIC OVER GETTING ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW AND THUS DOES NOT WANT TO SEE CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS LIKE THOSE GIVEN BY SADAT WHICH SEEM TO PROMISE MORE THAN CAN BE DELIVERED. KING IS STILL MOST EARNEST IN HIS DESIRE FOR PEACE AND BELIEVES PRESIDENT CARTER IS AND DOES NOT WANT HIS OWN PUBLIC STATEMENTS COUNSELING REALISM TO BE SEEN AS ANTI-PEACE, OR ALTERNATIVELY TO BE READ THAT HE HAS GIVEN UP ON HIS OWN AND JORDANS EFFORTS FOR PEACE.

5. ON THE LOCAL SCENE RIFAI SPENT LONG TIME OUTLINING THE FAULTS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN TERMS NOW FAMILIAR TO US ALL. HE ALSO SAID THAT KING WILL CHANGE GOVERNMENTS--THIS IS INEVITABLE-- AND SAID HE HOPED IT WOULD BE AFTER KINGS RETURN FROM THE US BUT SPOKE WITH NO GREAT ASSURANCE. RIFAI SAID THAT HE TOLD KING FRANKLY THAT ALL OF THE TALK HERE BOUT AN ALTERNATIVE
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HOMELAND FOR THE PLAESTINIANS IN JORDAN WAS DANGEROUS AND COULD TURN INTO TALK ABOUT AN ALTERNATIVE REGIME. KING SAID HE BELIEVES PROBLEM COULD BE CONTROLLED NOW.

6. ON PLO RIFAI SAID THAT LOCAL PLO REPS HAD COME TO HIM LAST WEEK AND SAID THAT IF KING SAW ARAFAT BEFORE GOING TO THE US ARAFAT WOULD TELL THE KING HE WOULD SUPPORT ANYTHING THAT THE US OFFERED HUSSEIN REGARDING THE AES BANK. KING REFUSED TO SEE ARAFAT. RIFAI SAID HE DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER THE OFFER IS TRUE, BUT THERE WOULD BE NO HARM IN KINGS SEEING ARAFAT TO FIND OUT. RIFAIS OWN VIEW IS THAT NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE ARABS TO GET TOGETHER ON WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE WEST BANK. HE BELIEVES ARAFAT COULD BE GOTTEN TO AGREE IN AMMAN TO THE UNITED ARAB KINGDON PLAN PROPOSED BY HUSSEIN IN 1972. HE(RIFAI) BELIEVES THIS IS WHAT PRESIDNT CARTER HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT. HE ALSO FEELS THAT

JORDAN SHOULD TAKE PALESTINIANS FROM WEST BANK AND PLO INTO ITS GENEVA DELGATION. PLO SHOULD BE MADE TO AGREE IN ADVANCE OVER THE NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES WITH THE OTHER ARABS. LINKS WITH JORDAN ALONG THE LINES OF THE UNITED ARAB KINGDON PLAN SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN ADVANCE IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS PROCESS WORK. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AND WITH US SUPPORT WHOLE PROCESS COULD MOVE FORWARD. THE KING WILL NOT SUGGEST IT. THE US SHOULD BE CAREFUL IF THIS IS WHAT IT WANTS TO SUGGEST IT TO HUSEIN IN A WAY THAT INDICATES THAT THE US DOES NOT EXPECT HUSSEIN TO TAKE ALL THE RISKS ALONE, OTHERWISE HUSSEIN WILL BYE HIMSELF SUPERCAUTIOUS REINFORCES AS HE IS BY A GROUP OF ADVISORS WHOSE THOUGHTS ARE ALONG THE SAME CONSERVATIVE LINES.

7. RIFAI MENTIONED THAT THE JORDANIAN-SYRIAN DISCUSSIONS
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ARE STALEMATED AND GETTING NOWHERE AS ARE THOSE BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PLO. JORDAN MAKES A MISTAKE IN EMPHASISING PLO PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE PROCESS. IT COULD LOSE ITS OWN ROLE IF IT PUSHES TOO HARD ON THIS THEME. THE EAST BANKERS DO IT BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IT WILL EVENTUALLY GIVEM THEM A FREE HAND TO ORGANIZE AN EAST BANK STATE WITHOUT THE PLO. BUT THE KING ACCORDING TO RIFAI MUST PLAY A WIDER ROLE.

8. RIFAI SAID HE NOW BELIEVES KING MAY GO TO DAMSCUS SATURDAY APRIL 16 TO SEE ASAD BEFORE HE GOES TO THE US. KING MIGHT HAVE GONE TODAY APRIL 15 BUT EGYPTS MUBARAK IS HERE. RIFAI HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING KING TO KEEP HIS LINES OPEN TO ASAD.
(RIFAIS STATEMENT IS CONTRARY TO WHAT KING TOLD ME EARLIER THIS WEEK OF HIS THEN CURRENT INTENTIONS HOWEVER RIFAI IS GENRALLY WELL INFORMED AND I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE THE KING TAKE ON A VISIT TO ASAD AT THE LAST MOMENT).

9. COMMENT. RIFAI MAKES A POINT OF NOTING THAT NONE OF KINGS ADVISORS WHO HE CHARACTERIZES AS SYCHOPHANTS KNOW OF THE ABOVE POSITION OF THE KING. HE OF COURSE HAS HIS OWN AXES TO GRIND, BUT I HAVE FOUND HIM ON FOREIGN POLICY QUESTIONS GENERALLY CLOSER TO KINGS OWN VIEWS THAN MANY OTHRS AROUND HIM. ON DOMESTIC ISSUES, RIFAI IS CLEARLY AT ODDS WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND HE IS EVEN MORE AND LESS RELIABLE IN HIS VIEWS IN THIS AREA.
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